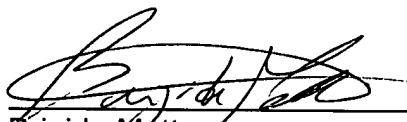


REMARKS

The specification has been amended to complete the requirements for asserting a priority claim under 35 U.S.C. 119(e). More specifically, the specification has been amended to introduce a cross-reference to the related provisional application from which the present application claims priority.

The Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the application is not considered to be in full condition for allowance, for any reason, the Applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims pursuant to MPEP 707.07(j) or in making constructive suggestions pursuant to MPEP 706.03 so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,


Brigide Mattar
Reg. No. 51,284

Date: February 10, 2004

SMART & BIGGAR
1000 de la Gauchetière St. West
Suite 3400
Montreal, Quebec, H3B 4W5
CANADA
Telephone : (514) 954-1500